

Recycled Water Task Force Fourth Meeting

*Progress Report: Public Education
and Outreach Work Group
September 12, 2002
Sacramento, CA*

1

Today's presentation

- ▲ Task Force charge
- ▲ PEO work group charge
- ▲ Opportunities
- ▲ Inputs to work group
- ▲ Work group guidelines
- ▲ Public participation observations
- ▲ Work group white paper
- ▲ Outreach to others
- ▲ Summary

2

Task Force

- ▲ Charge
 - ▲ Evaluate current state and local rules, regulations, ordinances, permits
 - ▲ Identify obstacles, disincentives to maximize recycled water use

3

Public Education and Outreach

- ▲ Charge
 - ▲ Outreach to the public about recycled water:
 - ▲ Address public perception, acceptance, education, social equity issues
 - ▲ Outreach to decision makers and others on behalf of the Task Force:
 - ▲ Identify and target entities to receive info from the Task Force
 - ▲ Seek ways to involve those targeted in our process

4

Opportunity

- ▲ Identify ways to:
 - ▲ Prevent opposition from forming
 - ▲ Learn what the public/dec. mkr. issues are
 - ▲ Communicate effectively
 - ▲ Listen effectively
 - ▲ Involve public early
 - ▲ Incorporate public issues within
 - ▲ Champion use of recycled water

5

Inputs for Work Group

- ▲ Comments from the Task Force meetings
- ▲ Work group meetings
- ▲ Email communications
- ▲ Literature search – summary underway

6

Work Group Guidelines

- ▲ *Identify public participation practices that have worked successfully*
- ▲ *Consider other outreach efforts, incorporate where applicable*
 - ▲ *Statewide water conservation program*
 - ▲ *Anti-smoking*
- ▲ *Be sensitive to public views in general (manipulation by politicians)*

7

More Guidelines

- ▲ *Public participation process – not just public information*
 - ▲ *Project assessment*
 - ▲ *Project decision making*
- ▲ *Public education process to empower – not to simply sway*
 - ▲ *Info is technical – make understandable*

8

More Guidelines still . . .

- ▲ *Role of the public – involves respect*
 - ▲ *Public's "unfounded fears"*
 - ▲ *Identifying what is simply unknown*
 - ▲ *Acknowledge risk factors*
 - ▲ *Openly discuss factors of uncertainty*
 - ▲ *Clear, upfront communications*
 - ▲ *Understanding irrigation is one thing – drinking it is another thing altogether*

9

Public Participation Observations

- ▲ *Not unique to recycled water issues*
- ▲ *Some issues are universal*
 - ▲ *Growing concern related to public projects, governmental processes – trust, comfort*
- ▲ *Lots of info*
 - ▲ *Literature*
 - ▲ *Testimonies, presentations, workshops, etc.*

10

Work Group White Paper

- ▲ *Guiding Principles:*
 - ▲ *Public needs to participate during all aspects of a recycled water project – earlier the better*
 - ▲ *Interactive – two-way process – not just one way communication with an advisory panel*
 - ▲ *More than just CEQA, NEPA – not enough*

11

White paper cont'd

- ▲ *Choice is a key ingredient in project planning and design*
 - ▲ *Local communities and elected officials decide how and when to use recycled water in their communities*
 - ▲ *Requires empowering participants to ensure appropriate public involved; informed decision making by elected officials*

12

White paper evolving . . .

- ▲ *Certain public views and political forces transcend a particular project type:*
 - ▲ *Potable versus non-potable*
 - ▲ *Unchecked growth, managed growth and no-growth*
 - ▲ *Timing of use of recycled water sends a signal – growth issue? Reliability issue?*

13

White paper evolving . . .

- ▲ *Respect for community decision makers*
 - ▲ *Different learning curves*
 - ▲ *Different water supply options*
 - ▲ *Different public perceptions*
- ▲ *Respect roles*
 - ▲ *Facilitators*
 - ▲ *Public*
 - ▲ *Decision makers*

14

White paper . . .

- ▲ *Role of education*
 - ▲ *Empower participants to be effective*
 - ▲ *Level playing field*
 - ▲ *On proposed recycled water project – language, technical factors, etc.*
 - ▲ *Comparison with other resource options – for planning, cost, safety, reliability, environment*
 - ▲ *Lead to informed decisions*

15

White paper . . .

- ▲ *State's education role*
 - ▲ *Publicly encourage through accurate information*
 - ▲ *Sponsor media campaigns (Flex your power)*
 - ▲ *School system K – university programs*
 - ▲ *Dispel myths – water is pure, recycled water is fall from grace*

16

White paper . . .

- ▲ *Education cont'd:*
 - ▲ *Message management challenges*
 - ▲ *Mixed message – don't drink the recycled water! Ooops – now it is OK to drink it.*
 - ▲ *Indirect reuse – held until safe; direct use – OK to use immediately – what is "safe"*
 - ▲ *Clear communications*
 - ▲ *Different levels of treatment to match different uses*

17

White paper . . .

- ▲ *Role of public education and outreach in overall task force charge:*
 - ▲ *Science & Health / Direct Potable Reuse – identified need for public advisory panel*
 - ▲ *To advise on how to approach public, kind of info, help explain what is "safe"*
 - ▲ *Task Force needs to evaluate – is this a statewide, ongoing panel?*

18

White paper . . .

- ▲ *Biting the bullet*
 - ▲ *General belief that direct potable use not acceptable until there is no other option*
 - ▲ *Task force input welcomed*
 - ▲ *However, the tool kit for all uses may have a core of similar activities, approaches*
 - ▲ *May want to include some specialty ideas for unique situations*

19

Outreach to others about the Task Force

- ▲ *Each member within own home turf*
 - ▲ *As part of regular speakers bureau, etc.*
- ▲ *Water Environment Research Foundation (WERF) and WEFTEC, Chicago, Sept. 29*
 - ▲ *Successful Public Involvement workshop*
- ▲ *POWER Conference, October 10, 2002, 7:00-8:20 am – public dialog*

20

Summary

- ▲ *Task Force reduce/remove impediments*
- ▲ *Public/decision maker issues – may be impediment*
 - ▲ *Perception, facts, beliefs, values*
 - ▲ *Complicated sometimes*
- ▲ *Lots of information on horizon – learn from the successes*

21

Summary cont'd

- ▲ *Guiding principles*
 - ▲ *Trust, respect, value of other views*
 - ▲ *Empower not brainwash*
 - ▲ *Appreciate community needs, situation*
 - ▲ *Involve public & other decision makers early and often*
 - ▲ *Realize other agendas may be in play*
 - ▲ *Choice is key!*

22

Your questions? Comments? Input?

*Are we meeting your expectations?
How are we doing?*

23